

Wednesday, Feb. 21, 1979

Camas is Camas again as strike ends

By PAT MOSER
Columbian Staff Writer

CAMAS — The lunch bucket brigade mobilized again this morning at the lower end of downtown Camas after six months on furlough.

The army took up its positions at Bilby's and the Turf Restaurants and the Home Bakery before invading the giant Crown Zellerbach Corp. mill a half block away.

Coffee and doughnut rations were devoured while the army waited for the 8 a.m. call to the mill.

When the time came, the workers paraded down Northeast Fourth Avenue and across Adams Street to the mill entrance at the clockroom, repeating a maneuver that has been a part of the Camas scene almost from the day the mill first opened.

An estimated 600 to 900 workers reported for the first shift since the Aug. 5 strike, most of them carrying their lunches, a change of clothes and safety shoes.

There were no fanfares as they entered the mill and many refused to talk when asked if the new contract was worth the sacrifice of more than six months without a paycheck.

"It is just like reporting for a day's work," Norm Little of Orchards said. "I'm not bitter at all."

"We could have had more in the contract, but after six months what do you expect?" Don Moore of Camas asked.

"I guarantee it didn't pass on my vote," Gary Larson of Camas said.

The contract, ratified by a 70 percent favorable vote,

calls for pay raises of 10, 9 and 8 percent over three years. The workers went on strike rejecting a 10 and 9 percent contract over two years. The union had sought 10% and 10 1/2 percent raises over two years.

"I think one of our union leaders said it best," Carl Altree of Camas said. "We bought a Cadillac contract but got a Chevy without any options on it."

But the issues of the strike seem to be swept aside as downtown Camas returned to normal during a shift change.

"I saw a lot of faces I hadn't seen in six months," said Leon Lamb, owner of Home Bakery, where workers drop in for pastries and coffee between shifts and during breaks.

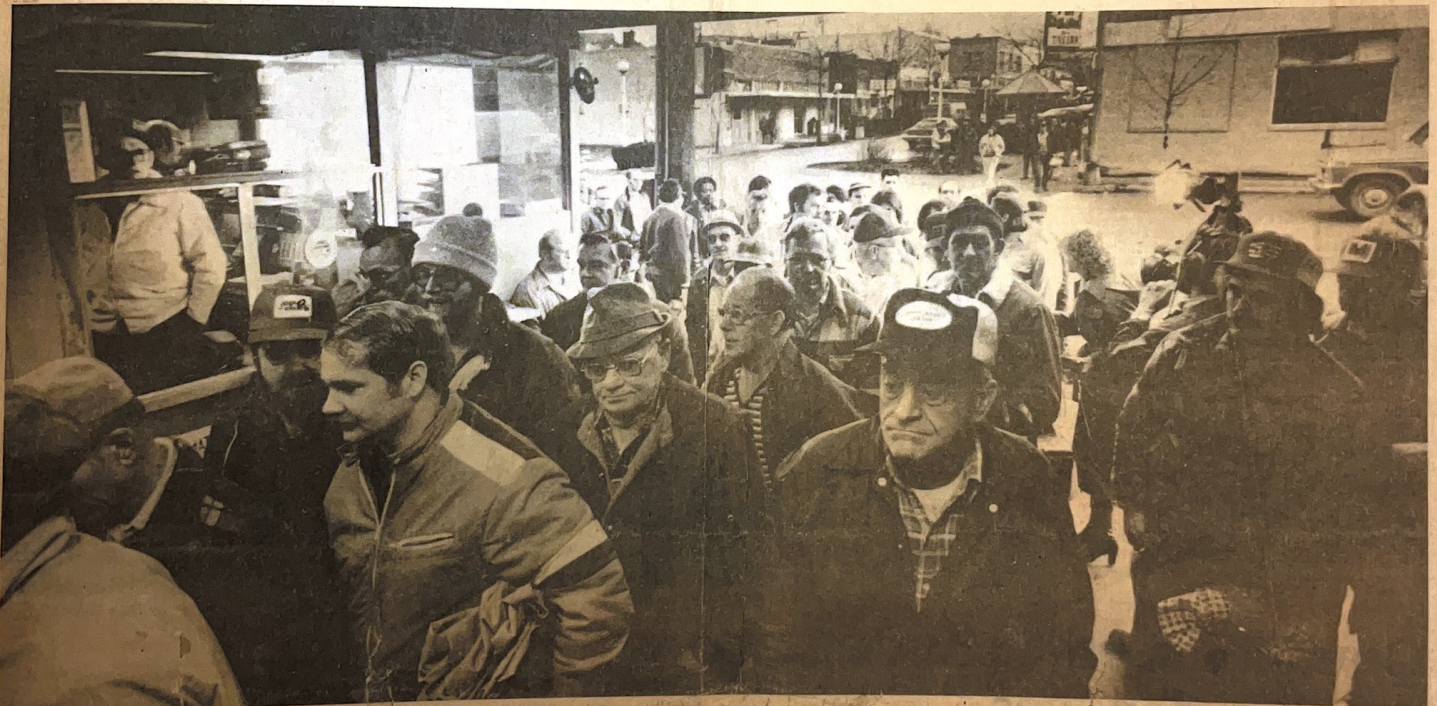
The parking lots, vacant for six months, were filled.

The return of cars brought a smile from Caesar Marquez, owner of Caesar's Union 76, where there is a parking lot in the rear.

"I saw a lot of good smiling faces," Marquez said. "It looked real good."

"But there is good and bad news," he added. "The good is that everyone is getting back to work. The bad is that I lost a good man — Jim Stanton who worked for me at night. He is going back to work in the mill."

By 8 a.m. the army of workers had disappeared, swallowed up by the mill. A few persons hung around the clockroom entrance asking about getting a job. They were told it will be five days before Crown Zellerbach Corp. hires replacements for those who gave up their jobs during the strike.



After more than six months off the job, Crown Zellerbach workers in Camas line up to punch the time clock today for their first day back at work. (Staff photo by Ralph Perry)